

CONGRATULATING WEST CLAY ELEMENTARY, A BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 14, 2016

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate an outstanding school in my district that is being honored as a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School. It is a pleasure to congratulate West Clay Elementary in Carmel, Indiana in celebration of this special occasion.

The National Blue Ribbon designation, given by the United States Department of Education, is awarded to both public and private schools across our great nation. Started by President Reagan and given annually since 1982, the award celebrates great American schools that achieve very high learning standards or are making significant improvements in the academic achievements of their students. In my district and across the country, the award recognizes the great educators, students, and parents who have worked so hard to ensure Indiana's children reach their full potential and achieve academic success.

For all of these reasons and many more, I am so proud that West Clay Elementary is receiving this prestigious designation. It is a wonderful acknowledgement of the school's commitment to providing young Hoosiers an exceptional education. While hundreds of schools nationwide were nominated, only 329 schools were designated as 2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools, making this recognition all the more impressive.

West Clay Elementary's dedication to empower students to become active, independent learners and educational risk takers helps students to achieve their goals and grow academically. This growth mindset allows students to explore opportunities in order to realize their full potential as learners. West Clay creates a positive environment for its students through the school community's commitment to diversity and creating a respectful environment where all students are celebrated for what makes them unique. Their commitment to diversity and excellence has made it a thriving community which fosters respect and builds on a foundation of open ongoing communication between students, teachers, and parents.

As an advocate for education and youth, I also want to acknowledge how important it is to our nation's future to encourage and raise a new generation of Americans who have the skills and knowledge to succeed both in and out of the classroom. Students like those at West Clay Elementary give me hope that we will accomplish this vital mission. Their outstanding work is an inspiration to students, educators, and parents across the nation. Once again, congratulations to West Clay Elementary. I am very proud of you.

DORETHA EDGECOMB

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 14, 2016

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the lifetime accomplishments of

my friend and the trailblazing Floridian, Mrs. Doretha Edgecomb. Her invaluable contribution to the Tampa Bay community is an inspiration to us all. Today, I am grateful to recognize her selfless dedication and honorable service to our community.

Mrs. Edgecomb is a proud graduate of Midleton High School in Tampa, Florida and later Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama. She began her esteemed career as a junior high school English teacher with Hillsborough County Public Schools. She later earned a Masters of Arts degree in Reading Education and received certification in Educational Leadership from the University of South Florida. Her 52 year career as an educator encompasses numerous positions throughout the field of education, to include Reading Teacher, Learning Specialist, Title I Parent Involvement Coordinator, and Elementary Principal.

In 1996, after retiring from the Hillsborough County School District, Mrs. Edgecomb joined Educational Testing Service, serving as a trainer, program developer, and technical assistance advisor for schools in the state departments of Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Additionally, she has taught in the College of Education at the University of South Florida.

Mrs. Edgecomb was elected to the Hillsborough County School Board in 2004 and re-elected in 2008, where she served as Vice Chair in 2010 and Chair in 2011. She is actively involved in several professional, civil, and social, and community organizations. She represents the School Board on the Hillsborough County Children's Board, serving her second term as Chair. She serves as a member of the Florida School Boards Association Board of Directors as a legislative liaison, board of directors for the Regional Educational Lab-Southeast, Florida State University, advisory committee of Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services, and the executive board of the Council of Great City Schools.

Mrs. Edgecomb is a 55-year member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, Athena Society, Inc., where she is the President-Elect of the Robert Saunders Friends of the Library, and a faithful member of Hyde Park United Methodist Church.

Mrs. Edgecomb shared a strong partnership with her distinguished late husband the Honorable Judge George E. Edgecomb. Judge Edgecomb an activist in his own right, blazed the trail for African-Americans in the Tampa Bay. He was the first African-American to serve as Assistant County Solicitor, Assistant State Attorney, and to be appointed as County Judge for Hillsborough County. They share one daughter, Allison who is an Administrator in Hillsborough County Public Schools.

Mrs. Edgecomb has selflessly dedicated her life to our community and the children of the Tampa Bay. Countless students and young professionals have benefited from her immeasurable efforts and unabashed enthusiasm. Her commitment will always be remembered and appreciated. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of a grateful Tampa Bay community, I am proud to recognize Doretha W. Edgecomb for her lifelong exemplary service to the State of Florida.

CELEBRATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

HON. CHARLES W. DENT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 14, 2016

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of bringing to the attention of the House Grace Episcopal Church of Allentown, Pennsylvania as it celebrates its 150th anniversary this year.

Since its earliest days, the Lehigh Valley has been home to a large population of German Americans who established Lutheran and Reformed congregations throughout the region. With the advent of iron-making, however, many British workers began migrating to Allentown, bringing their Episcopal roots with them. To placate their increasing desire for a church, Rev. Azariah Prior was sent to Allentown where he led Episcopalian services in the Lehigh County Courthouse for three years.

During that time, the first commercially successful anthracite coal-powered iron furnace was created in the community now known as Catasauqua in 1840. Additional workers were needed, and many from Britain joined their fellow countrymen and women in the Lehigh Valley. Further north, in Mauch Chunk, Asa Packer—the renowned railroad tycoon, Congressman, and founder of Lehigh University—requested membership to the Presbyterian Church, but was purportedly rejected due to his unwillingness to sign a temperance pledge. The father of Packer's chief advisor, William Sayre, encouraged him to become Episcopalian. Packer agreed, and the operational headquarters of his Lehigh Valley Railroad in South Bethlehem became a gathering point for other Episcopalians.

Finally, in 1865, the construction of Grace Episcopal Church began on a lot at the northwest corner of Linden and 5th Street.

Today, the Church serves as a bastion of support to the surrounding community through its ministry and its pre-school through elementary, as well as GED, educational programs. It continues to provide a spiritual and physical comfort to the surrounding areas in the Lehigh Valley.

I ask the House to join me in offering congratulations to Grace Episcopal's congregation, and I wish them another 150 years of continued community outreach and spiritual edification.

IN HONOR OF SHERIFF DAVID BYRNES

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 14, 2016

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Sheriff David Byrnes for serving 16 years as Kaufman County Sheriff and for serving a total of 47 years in law enforcement protecting the citizens of Texas.

On November 5, 2017 David Byrnes will retire from a lifetime of serving the United States and Texas. Sheriff Byrnes began his career in the Navy before pursuing a career in law enforcement. He began his law enforcement career as a Deputy Sheriff in Tarrant County.